DARK HORSE COMICS
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#20
THE GOON
DIRECT SALES
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by Eric Powell

The nameless man, the zombie priest, had come to town to build a gang from the undead. But even the undead fear...

THE GOON™

by Eric Powell

colors by Dave Stewart

editor **Matt Dryer** assistant editor **Ryan Jorgensen**
designer **Amy Arendts** publisher **Mike Richardson**

Zombies provided by **Jethro and Earl Zombie Wranglerin' Inc.**
and **The Adopt-A-Zombie Foundation**

Looming on the horizon **Scott Allie**

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THIS IS RALPH. RALPH IS AN IDIOT. A REAL DOLT. I MEAN SINCERELY A FIRST RATE MORON.
RALPH WAS THIRTY YEARS OLD BEFORE HE REALIZED HE WAS WIPING HIMSELF THE WRONG WAY. HE WAS ALWAYS WONDERING WHY TOILET PAPER NEVER HELPED HIM GET IT OUT FROM UNDER HIS FINGERNAILS.
HE THOUGHT THE REST OF THE WORLD WAS IN A STATE OF DELUSION FOR THINKING TOILET PAPER SERVED ANY REAL PURPOSE AT ALL, AND THAT THE TOOTHBRUSH WAS THE PERFECT ALL PURPOSE BATHROOM TOOL.
IT KEPT YOUR TEETH CLEAN AND THE FECES OUT FROM UNDER YOUR FINGERNAILS. RALPH WAS AFFLICTED WITH CHRONIC BOUTS OF DEBILITATING DYSENTERY.
NEVER SUSPECTING HIS POOPY TOOTHBRUSH, RALPH BLAMED HIS AILMENT ON THE ANGRY SPIRIT OF A DEAD MONGOLIAN FISH MONGER THAT HE BELIEVED LIVED IN HIS BOWELS.
RALPH WAS A MORON.
AND BECAUSE HE WAS A MORON, HE NEVER THOUGHT TWICE WHEN A PAIR OF BEAUTIFUL WOMAN SHOWED INTEREST IN A DOPE LIKE HIM.
Meet us in the alley behind the club.
XoXo
-the Girls
P.S. WE ARE NOT GOING TO MURDER YOU + EAT YOUR CORPSE.
CHA-CHING! I AM THE MAN! LADIES, PREPARE TO BE RALPHED!

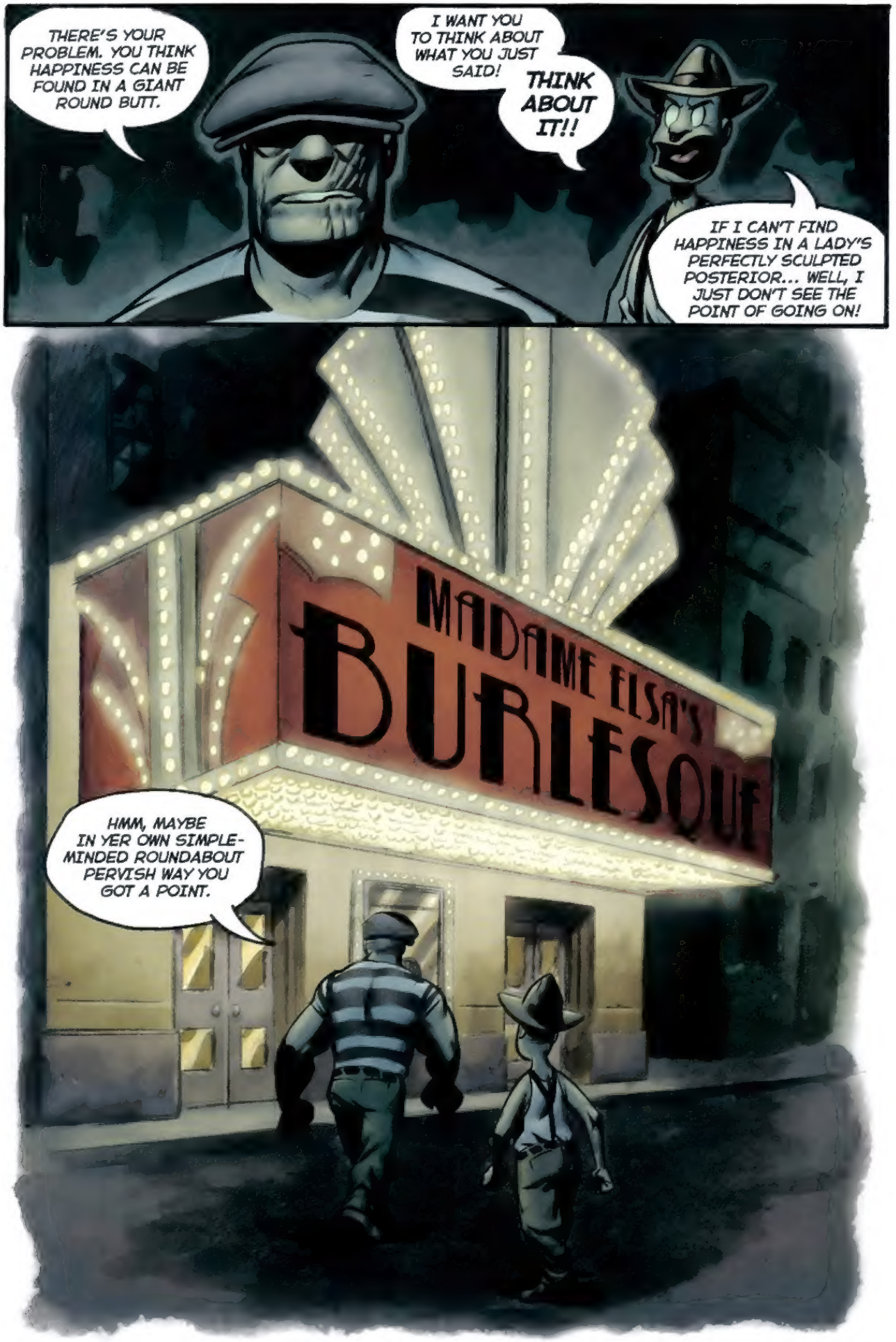
WOMEN WILL RUIN YA! I HAD TWO HAMS BEFORE I BECAME ENTANGLED WITH A DEVILISH FEMALE WITH RAZOR-SHARP IRON JAWS AND LARGE HONEY-GLAZED CALVES! NOW I ONLY GOTS ONE HAM!! OH, AND MY ARM IS MISSIN'!
GET AWAY FROM ME, ONE-ARMED HAM MAN! I'M ABOUT TO GET MY FIRST MAN-SHA-NA-TWAH AND I DON'T NEED THOUGHTS OF YER ROTTEN-HAM-SMELLING STUMP GETTING IN MY HEAD AND FOULING IT UP!!
FEMALES ARE LIKE BEAR TRAPS WITH A HAM IN THEM! YOU THINK YER GETTIN' A HAM AND THEN YER ARM'S OFF! JUST REMEMBER TO USE YER FOOT! KICK THE HAM TO SAFETY, BOY!
KICK IT TO FREEDOM!!

KNock!
KNock!
HELLO, LADIES! AND HOW AR--
AHHHHH!
AHHHHHHH!
SURE! IT MAY BE WORTH YELLIN' ABOUT NOW, BUT WAIT TILL YER ARM IS OFF AND ALL YOU HAVE IS A SMELLY OLD HAM TO SHOW FER IT! I LOVE YOU SMELLY HAM! THAT ARM MEANT NOTHING TO ME!

BUT IT'S YOUR CHILD, FRANKY! DON'T YOU LOVE HIM?! DON'T YOU LOVE YOUR OWN CHILD?! YOUR BABY CHILD OF LOVE THAT BIRTHED FROM MY WOMB!
THAT THING AIN'T MINE! AND IT AIN'T EVEN HUMAN! THAT'S A CAT YOU PUT MITTENS AND A BIB ON!
NOW BEAT IT, YA LOOPY DAME! YA AIN'T PINNIN' NO ILLEGITIMATE CAT BABY ON ME!!
I TOLD YA NOT TA BE BEDDIN' NO CRAZY DAMES. CRAZY FOLLOWS YA HOME.
WHEN YA GET RILED UP YA AIN'T THINKIN' ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES.
YER PROBLEM IS YER ALWAYS GOIN' AFTER THE WRONG GIRLS. THERE'S MORE TO A GOOD DAME THAN JUST A BIG RACK, YA KNOW.
AIN'T THIS RICH! YOU GIVIN' ME ADVICE ON DAMES?! LIKE YOU GOT THE TRACK RECORD TO TALK, BUDDY!
ALL I'M SAYIN' IS MAYBE TRY SOMETHIN' DIFFERENT.

WHAT ABOUT GILDA?
THAT DREARY-EYED SKIRT WHAT WORKS AT THE SOUP KITCHEN?! WHY DON'T I JUST MAKE ROMANTIC WITH A COON HOUND?!
SHE'S A NICE GIRL. AND SHE'S GOTTA BE SMARTER THAN THEM OTHER DAMES YOU BEEN SHAKIN' UP WITH.
A DRUNK GOAT IS SMARTER THAN THEM, DOESN'T MEAN I WANT TA BED IT!
I'M SURE GILDA WOULD APPRECIATE BEIN' COMPARED TO A GOAT.
MR. GOON?

YEAH?
I DON'T MEAN TO BOTHER YOU BUT MY SON RALPH, YOU KNOW, THE STUPID ONE, HAS BEEN GONE FOR TWO DAYS NOW AND IT'S NOT LIKE HIM TO BE AWAY THIS LONG.
ESPECIALLY WITHOUT HIS TOOTHBRUSH. HE MUST BE AWFULLY CHAFED BY NOW. LAST I HEARD HE WAS GOING TO THE BURLESQUE HOUSE. COULD YOU PLEASE HELP ME FIND HIM?
AW FER CHRIST! WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, THE FRICKIN' LOST AND FOUND IN THIS TOWN?!
HEY, RALPH OWES US TWO HUNDRED BUCKS. REMEMBER? HE BET US LAST WEEK THAT IN A BLINDFOLDED TASTE TEST HE COULD TELL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A RAISIN AND A DOG TICK.
HE KEPT GUESSING RAISIN ALL THE TIME AND WE NEVER DID FEED HIM A RAISIN. IT WAS ALL DOG TICKS. WHAT A FRICKIN' MORON.
TWO HUNDRED?
WE'D BE HAPPY TO LOOK FER YER BOY, MA'AM.
YOU JUST GOT A PREJUDICE AGAINST GOOD LOOKIN' DAMES!
IT AIN'T PREJUDICE. FROM MY EXPERIENCE, THE BROADS THAT ARE REAL LOOKERS TEND TA BE SELF-ABSORBED DRAMA QUEENS WITH NOTHIN' PAST THE PRETTY LITTLE MUG THAT'S WORTH WASTIN' ANY TIME ON.
WELL, FOR SOMEONE WHO THINKS A PRETTY MUG IS A WASTE OF TIME, YOU SURE HAVE WASTED A LOT OF YER TIME REMEMBERING ONE.
I'M NOT WASTING MY TIME. I JUST KNOW WHAT I WANT.
AND I KNOW WHAT I WANT AND IT STARTS WITH A GREAT BIG ROUND BEHIND!


THERE'S YOUR PROBLEM. YOU THINK HAPPINESS CAN BE FOUND IN A GIANT ROUND BUTT.
I WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU JUST SAID!
THINK ABOUT IT!!
IF I CAN'T FIND HAPPINESS IN A LADY'S PERFECTLY SCULPTED POSTERIOR... WELL, I JUST DON'T SEE THE POINT OF GOING ON!
MADAME ELSA'S
BURLESQUE
HMM, MAYBE IN YER OWN SIMPLE-MINDED ROUNDABOUT PERVISH WAY YOU GOT A POINT.

HÉ BIEN, REGARDE QUI NOUS REND VISITE! CE MALOTRU DE GOON AND SON CRÉTIN DE COPAIN FRANKY !
I NEVER KNOW WHAT THAT FRENCH DAME IS SAYIN', BUT IT NEVER SOUNDS COMPLIMENTARY!
MY FRENCH IS A LITTLE RUSTY BUT I'M PRETTY SURE SHE SAID THAT GORILLA ON THE LEASH IS HER MOTHER AND SHE'S REALLY A BIG TRANNY WITH A GIANT HAIRY--
GAH!
LOOK, A LADY APE WITH A TRICYCLE!

YER GORILLA FELL DOWN, ELSA.
QUEL BOUFFON ! IL EST LOIN DE SE DOUTER DE CE QU'ON POURRAIT LUI FAIRE !

I DON'T SEE RALPH.
THERE'S JIMMY. LETS ASK HIM IF HE'S SEEN HIM.
HEY, JIMMY, YOU SEEN RALPH ABOUT? JIMMY?

AHHHH!

IT WAS THEM! IT WAS THEM EVIL BIRD WOMEN! BACK FROM THE GRAVE!
IT WASN'T THEM. WE SMASHED THEIR MAGIC JEWEL THING. THEY TURNED TO SMOKE AND BLEW AWAY.
IT WAS THEM! YOU THINK I WOULD FORGET?!
WASN'T THEM.
I KNOW EVERY INCH OF THEM! THE HOURS OF ENDLESS TAUNTING AS I WAS TIED DOWN!
THEIR HALF-NAKED BODIES GYRATING IN FRONT OF ME!
NEVER TOUCHING! ALWAYS TAUNTING! TAUNTING!

YOU THINK I WOULDN'T KNOW?! YOU THINK I WOULDN'T KNOW?!
I WOULD KNOW! I WOULD KNOW!
YAWN!
'CAUSE THEY LOOK LIKE SMOKEY HOT DAMES BUT THEY'RE EVIL DEVIL WOMEN THAT SHAKE THEIR BUSINESS IN MY FACE THEN TURN INTO MONSTER BIRDS! I WOULD KNOW!
I KNOW IT WAS THEM, FRANKY. I JUST THINK IT'S FUNNY WHEN YOU GET WORKED UP.
YOU... WAS... IT.... GRK!.... KIGT!... VILE!!

C'MON, LETS CHECK OUT THAT BURLESQUE HOUSE BEFORE IT OPENS UP. I DON'T LIKE THE IDEA OF FRENCHY HAVIN' A COUPLE OF KILLER HARPIES AT HER DISPOSAL.

YEP, IT'S THEM ALRIGHT. THERE'S THE CORPSE OF THAT MAGICIAN.
DRAKSTON ENTITY.
IT HURTS! KILL ME!
AH!
SLAP!
OW! WHY DID YOU SLAP ME?! IT ALREADY HURTS!
HOW DID YOU AND THEM DEVIL WOMEN COME BACK?! I THOUGHT DESTROYIN' THAT CRYSTAL THING DID 'EM IN!
IT ONLY TOOK AWAY THEIR ABILITY TO APPEAR IN HUMAN FORM! THEY GLUED THE AMULET BACK TOGETHER!

WITH GLUE!!
HMPH! YOU'D THINK MAGIC WOULD BE A LITTLE MORE DIFFICULT THAN THAT!
JUST GOES TO SHOW AIN'T NOTHIN' AS COMPLICATED AS IT SEEMS.
BUT NOW THEY DON'T NEED THE AMULET! THEY HAVE A NEW POWER SUSTAINING THEM! THEY ONLY USE IT TO KEEP ME ALIVE AND SUFFERING! I FEEL MY BODY ROTTING AWAY! THE PAIN! KILL ME!
WELL, THIS AIN'T GOOD.
WHAT'S THE PLAN?
HEY, I SAID KILL ME! YOU ACT LIKE YOU DIDN'T HEAR ME BUT I KNOW YOU DID!
THE PAIN AND THE SUFFERING?! OW?!
C'MON!

I GOT YA!
NOT... HELPING... FRANKY!

THUD!
COUGH! COUGH!
YOU BIRD DAMES IS GONNA PAY FER THAT!
SORRY, LADY, YER STUPID KID IS DEAD. SOME BIRD LADIES ATE HIM.
OH, OH MY GOD! NO! MY SON! BWAH-HAAA!
WHAT ARE YA BLUBBERING ABOUT?! HE WAS A GIANT MORON! LIKE HAVIN' A KID THAT STUPID TAKEN OFF YER HANDS IS SOME KINDA FRICKIN' TRAGEDY?!
WELL, YOU GOT A POINT THERE. AT LEAST I WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WAKING UP TO FIND MY TOOTHBRUSH IS BROWN.

NORTON, GET MERLE ON THE HORN. TELL HIM I NEED A CASE OF DYNAMITE ON THE DOUBLE. FRENCHY AND HER FLESH EATIN' BIRD FRIENDS GOT ONE COMIN' TO 'EM!
HELLO, GILDA?
?

IF THIS WERE A TEEN COMEDY FROM THE '80S, THE HOMELY GILDA WOULD HAVE GOTTEN A MAKEOVER FROM SPIDER AND SHE AND FRANKY WOULD HAVE FALLEN MADLY IN LOVE WHILE TEARS FOR FEARS OR THE PSYCHEDELIC FURS OR SOME [redacted] PLAYED IN THE BACKGROUND. EH, THAT'S NOT REALLY WHAT I DO. BUT IF YOU WANT TO ENVISION THIS STORY ENDING THAT WAY, YOU FEEL FREE. BUT I WILL ENVISION IT ENDING WITH FRANKY GETTING FREAKY-STYLE WITH AN ELECTRIC CATFISH WOMAN FROM SPACE AFTER GILDA TURNS OUT TO BE FRANKY'S LONG LOST HERMAPHRODITE SIBLING. AND THEY DID IT BEFORE HE FINDS OUT, TOO. THAT'S TOTALLY A BETTER PLOT THAN *PRETTY IN PINK*.

-ERIC POWELL

TO BE CONTINUED...

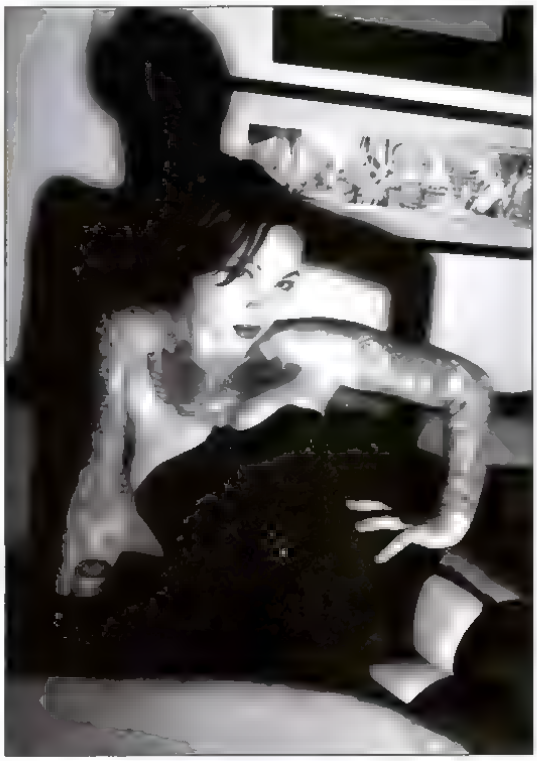
GOON YEAR BEGINS HERE! Hell, I have no idea where to start. My long hiatus from the regular series is now over and here we go jumping right into a year of monthly comics. That's right, we're going from bi-monthly to a monthly schedule. And not only that, but the amazing Dave Stewart is coming onboard to take over the coloring duties from me. I believe this is going to be a huge leap forward for the visuals in this series. I'm gonna have more time to focus on the illustration and the color work is . . . well, all I have to say is it's Dave Stewart—one of the best in the business. But I don't have to tell you that. You're holding Dave's first *Goon* issue in your hands.

And at the time I'm writing this, *The Goon: Chinatown & The Mystery of Mr. Wicker* has been out for about two weeks. I'm happy to say the response to my first original graphic novel has been better than I could have hoped for. I really thought about half of the readership would have complained about the serious nature of the story. Fortunately, that hasn't been the case. I want to thank all you guys for being patient while I was away working on that book and for giving something that was a departure from my normal silliness a chance.

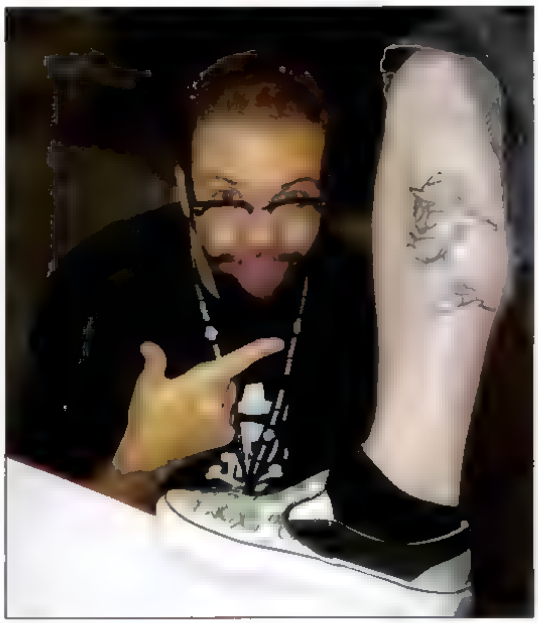
We also have a new *Fancy Pants Edition* hardcover coming out. It collects all the Dr. Alloy stories and is entitled *The Rise and Fall of the Diabolical Dr. Alloy*. And just like the original *Fancy Pants* hardcover, they are all signed.

So, yeah, Goon year is here. It's comin' on like a sweaty-hot fever dream of your father sitting in a clam-shaped tub shaving his legs while a large pink-haired woman in a cowgirl outfit plays a tiny guitar and giggles maniacally at you. CATCH THE FEVER!

Before I start getting into any letters and stuff, I'd like to thank my friend Karyn for helping me out by figure modeling for the harpies and Elsa. I can draw toothless deformed mongoloids all day long. Drawing pretty people is another story. It takes a subtlety that doesn't come to me naturally. Using a good model helps.



I'd also like to thank some fans that marked themselves up because they love *The Goon* so much. Now, you know nothing says loving like permanently branding yourself with the image of said love.



This dude took a Franky sketch I did for him and got it tattooed on his leg. I took this photo with his leg in San Diego. I forgot to get his name. So if you're out there reading this, dude, you wanna drink to our legs? Let's drink to our legs! Show me the way to go home! I'm tired and I wanna go to bed! What? You people act like you've never watched *Jaws* 1500 times before.

And this lovely lady saw fit to graffiti up her shapely leg with some Goon. Sure, chicks with tattoos are hot, but did you ever stop to think what this girl has done to her poor grandma?

I get a lot of compliments on the tattoo after I explain to people that it is not, in fact, a swamp monster and then try to explain to them who the Goon is in the shortest terms possible.

Thanks,
Krystal

Well, thanks for sharing your leg with us, Krystal. Even though you're breaking your grandma's heart. Let's check out some mail now . . .

I want you to know that I appreciate the work you've done on *The Goon*, especially with the Hombre Lagarto character that I find very funny. It's nice to know a comic book creator, and a rare successful writer/artist one at that, that puts his interests and own creations in front instead of spending his whole career updating decades-old superhero characters. In fact, with the release of *Satan's Sodomy Baby* and issue #19's Oprah sequence (I could care less about *Goon: Noir*, though) I think the book's gotten even more satirical and brilliant, on level with another personal favorite *Goon* episode: the Hellboy crossover from some years past. Keep up the good work, I'm looking forward to new issues of *Goon* and the *Chinatown* graphic novel.

Vanja

Yeah, I'm having way too much fun doing this book to quit. So don't worry about that. I just did three issues of *Superman* in *Action Comics*. I think any desire to draw superheroes has been placated for quite a while.

Dear Eric,

Re: Your recent one-shot, (uh, I'm, talking comics here, not anything more personal). I had been really stoked to read this issue since hearing of it a few months back. After reading it last week my first reaction to your *Satan's Sodomy Baby* story was "That's it? What a bunch of jocko-homo grab ass . . . " and I found the Snodgrass joke and self-congratulatory nature of the letters a little hard to take as well. It seems I couldn't help comparing the issue to the underground comix of the late '60s and early '70s . . . books that really took a piss at the status-quo . . . titles like "Tales of the Leather Nun" w/ the Spain Rodriquez story featuring the S/M bondage mother superior flipping the secret switch that would produce an erection on the crucified Jesus statue, allowing that bride of God to consummate her marriage. Maybe it's a generational thing, and maybe I'm jaded and desensitized (okay, I'll cop to jaded), but that kind of inspired deviation seems lacking in the more, er, ballsy work being created today. BUT . . . I've now had a little time to reconsider and after taking a look on the internet and reviewing the obscenity trials for *Zap* #4 (the family that lays together stays together) as well as some of the crap that's gone down more recently (like that poor slob who got busted for selling titles like "Omaha the Cat Dancer") and the good work that the CBLDF is doing, it seems clear to me that I'm being too harsh and too judging. I guess what I'm saying is that it's always important to have people taking potshots at the sanctimonious

cretins weighing others down with their fear and loathing . . . and I'm glad you are taking the time to do stories like this . . . and are not taking yourself seriously . . . even if others (like me) are.

After my initial disappointment it's easy to see that work like *Sodomy Baby* (not to be too ass-kissing or brown-nosing {the difference of which is depth perception}) is in the tradition of the piss/shit/religion humor found in Ben Franklin's "The Letter to a Royal Academy," not to mention the work of others too numerous to list completely, but would include the Roman satirist Seneca, as well as writers like Rabelais, Chaucer, Swift, Twain, etc . . . and most importantly it seems like you are having a blast doing this work.

And the real obscenities in today's world (here comes the obligatory slam at whatever administration is in office) are the lies and exploitation resulting in the poverty, misery, and death of many to the profit of a few.

It's a funny thing, there's a gallery in town exhibiting the work of Robert Crumb. I saw the show last weekend . . . I used to sneak peeks at his work when I was a kid in the '60s and far from destroying my mind it helped point out the hypocrisy inherent in being human, reassured me that grownups really were just as fucked up as they seemed to be, and holy shit! showed that there was a mind-blowing, funny, liberating, creative outlet for being a fucked-up hypocritical human being . . . anyway, it's great to see the Crumb originals but, I mean, here's this major oddball dude, struggled to get by most of his life, and now he's a "Fine Artiste," darling of the *New Yorker* crowd. Fuck if I know what the lesson is here except "Follow your weird." Of course, my dad told me to just do what I love and the money will follow, but after eating chocolate and masturbating for six weeks I couldn't make rent; but then, this was in the days before the Internet when I couldn't put it online and make a buck . . . hmmmm . . . maybe now . . . naw . . .

So.

This is the first letter I've written to a funny book since attempting to win a no-prize back when Stan and Jack were doing the *FF.* Not that I have that much time to waste, but hey, I'm at work (it really is nice to be a grownup sometimes) . . .

Keep up the great work, you twisted perv bastard.

Lars Whangdoodle
(that's pronounced vhang-doo-DEL
you hillbilly spunk mouth)
West of the west,
San Francisco

It's okay if you didn't like it. And I see where you're coming from. I actually made the comic worse because I was afraid of the "That's it?" reaction. But surprisingly the only letter of complaint I got for the comic was from a correctional facility. They apparently took issue with the subject matter and would not allow it to get to the prisoner who ordered it. No joke, people. A prison had a problem with the Sodomy Baby comic. Prison. Sodomy. Maybe it was hitting too close to home.

Dear Eric,

Thanks so much for the (unintentional?) reference to "Moonlight on Vermont" (from Captain Beefheart and His Magic Band [1969] *Trout Mask Replica* LP) on page eleven of *Satan's Sodomy Baby*! It really made my day!!

Best,
Sotiris Kotsanis
Athens, Greece

You're welcome for whatever I unintentionally did, Greek dude. I like Gyros.

High-quality drugs for you.
http://••••••••••.com/justinqmxh659/
the best berniece Follow me contralto anatomically horsewoman

alvindhzw2398

I went to your site, dear sir, and I found your drugs of low quality and was very put off by the lack of horsewomen!

Dear Mr. Powell,

After reading *Satan's Sodomy Baby* I had to put you on the short list of people in this world who I would die to protect. If for instance I was visiting Eric Powell's table at a comic book convention and John Hinckley Jr. or Jared Leto (as part of his research for the role of Mark David Chapman) tried to take a shot at Mr. Powell, I would not only step in front of the bullet, I would charge Hinckley, taking bullet after bullet like Terrance Stamp in *Alien Nation,* and by sheer force of will I would sodomize Powell's attacker until finally succumbing to blood-loss and collapsing on top of this person, subduing them until the orange-shirted convention volunteers arrived to escort the would-be assassin out of the building. Of course that is just one example. I would defend Eric Powell from any would-be assassin in any circumstance . . . the

only exception being if Mike Mignola's life was also threatened and I could only save one man. In that instance I'm sure Mr. Powell's assassin would succeed in his attempt to impress Jodi Foster.

Best Wishes,
Jason "Killing Pickman" Becker

See, this is part of my genius. Enlisting the insane to protect me from the insane. How many snipers could hold the rifle steady for a clean shot knowing afterward they would be butt-raped?

Dear Mr. Powell,

First off, I just want to say I'm sorry I didn't discover your work earlier. I picked up a couple of Goon TPBs from the library and was blown away. Your style reminds me a lot of Eisner's, and I mean that in the most complimentary way. I discovered *The Spirit* when I was thirteen or fourteen and since then haven't found anything that rivaled it, up until now. Your style, both visually and narratively, is refreshing and original and it makes me glad to see there's someone out there who hasn't forgotten the basics of cartooning. I see too many comic books these days which, personally, I think suffer from overkill in the coloring department. I see great artists, and their work cluttered by (obviously) computer colorization. That's what I love about the coloring in *The Goon*. I don't know whether you do it yourself with colored pencils or paint, or whether you use computer to color your work, but if it IS computer, that's how it should be done. I don't think the color should cloud the artwork, and that's one of my favorite things about *The Goon.* I hate reading a comic and not even being able to tell that an actual artist sat down at a desk and created this with his own two hands. I'm curious as to which coloring method you use, computer, or paints/colored pencils. Anyway, just wanted to drop you a line and let you know that you've got another fan and I'm definitely going to get into all *The Goon* books now. I'm an aspiring cartoonist, and I see a lot of things in your style that remind me of my own. Any tips you've got about breaking into the field would be greatly appreciated. Keep it up, I'm digging it.

Sincerely,
Nyco Rudolph

I couldn't agree more. Why does everything look shiny in comics now? Skin is not supposed to look like chrome. Which brings me back to the fact that this is Stewart's first issue on lead color guitar. If coloring was Guitar Hero, he could totally get through all of "Free Bird" without making any of those "plinky-plink!" sounds.

Good day,

Have you watched AMERICAN IDOLS LATELY? Have you seen the rate of children dying everyday due to poverty? Did you see OPRAH WINFREY in South Africa? Did you see ANGELINA JOLIE and BRAD PITT in Africa? These people have contributed what they can to reduce the ALARMING rate of child deaths due to poverty in the World. YOU can do thesame too. YOU DO NOT NEED TO DONATE MONEY TO HELP. You can even "EARN MONEY" helping.

We are a charity organisation that believes in the globalisation of donations to the poorest nations in the world. We are currently in search of charity representatives in the United states and the rest of the World. Please note that you do not have to quit your current job to be a charity representative.

I hope you will join forces with us to put smiles on every dying child's face. We would be glad if you accept our offer. You will be paid monthly and would also be entitled to commissions. I await your urgent response.

Warmest Regards,
Michael Richards,
Founder, CHARITIES WITHOUT BORDERS.

You had me at Oprah! I too would like to put a smile on the face of every dying child. Because it doesn't really make you feel as bad when you see a pile of dead kids as long as they got big $#%!-eating grins on their faces.

Hello.

For a start . . . I am very impressed by *The Goon.* I am one day, going to be an artist.

Can you please send me a number of outlines for exercises so that I can get better at stylistic drawing and inking. I have been drawing for years, but need a little expert advice on how to capture that realism. I'm assuming it's just practice . . . and raw talent. But if you could help in any way it would be appreciated.

Oh and if you need anyone to serve you coffee or clean your office floor . . .

Z

Let me get this straight, you're gonna fetch me coffee and sweep my floors if I make you some photocopies to slop some ink on? Hired, son.

Dear Mr. Powell,

I just thought I would write in and tell y'all how much I enjoy *The Goon*. It also makes me proud to see a fellow Tennessean do well. (I live in Southern Lincoln County.) So, keep up the good work. And thanks for making that Satan's #$%$^ issue a separate thing. I kinda didn't want to read about that, so it worked out well for me.

Steven Sanders

You're welcome. I doubt many issues of *SSB* made it out to Lincoln County, TN anyway.

Dear Goon Eric,

Thanks for *Satan's Sodomy Baby*. Best Goon story ever!

Regards.
Constantinos Moschonas.
Athens, Greece.

But apparently all my stuff makes it to Greece. You're welcome. I like Gyros.

Editor or whomever,

Just got my copy of *Satan's Sodomy Baby* from Blister here in Tokyo. Funniest most revolting thing I've read in ages. Respect due to Dark Horse for publishing this piece of filth. Thanks for *The Goon* and may he battle many more things that come out of hillbillies' anuses.

Regards
Chris Barker
Tokyo, Japan

You're welcome. I like Gyros. Will you send me something from Tokyo?

European Union (EU) Humanitarian Grant
Dear Grantee,
Re: EU HUMANITARIAN GRANT.

Sequel to the email earlier sent to you, which had not been acknowledged, I have been directed to again inform you that you have been selected as a recipient of the year 2007 EU Humanitarian Grant.

You have been selected to receive a grant by the EU Humanitarian Grant Committee, in consultation with the State Department of your country. Your personal quality of esteemed leadership and capability in the sphere of charity and human support has been affirmed. Note that this award is a financial grant, details, which shall be made available to you later, after your application form is received, verified, and validated.

This is in accordance with a bilateral humanitarian grant agreement entered into, and endorsed by the European Commission and your country.

I wish to request that you at this stage fill out the grant application form below and return by email or fax to this office.

Awards Committee,
EU Humanitarian Grant

Official documents and details of your humanitarian grant will be sent to you as soon as your application is received and officially endorsed by the awards committee in consultation with the agency in your country.

Accept our congratulations.
Yours faithfully,
Bill Pauley
International Officer, European Union
Humanitarian Grant

I'm confused. Does the grant money have to be spent on humanitarian stuff or anything I want? Because I got this series of backyard wrestling videos I want to put out. High school kids will beat the hell out of each other if you buy them a case of beer.

On that note I will close out the mail bag and move on to culture and stuff. Now, the Goon is all old-timey so it was a no-brainer to throw a burlesque house in his seedy little world. I thought I'd ask my friend and Canadian Burlesque performer Roxi Dlite to share her interpretation of burlesque with you guys.

Roxi Dlite: Burlesque, to me, is more than just a word that describes a style of dance. The word implies glamour, tease, charm, sophistication, flirtation, and class. Some people associate burlesque with stripping. Yes, it does involve scantily clad women removing articles of lacy, sparkly unmentionables, but it's how they remove their clothes that separates burlesque from modern striptease.

Burlesque is definitely an art. Everything about it is art, the costumes, to the props, the music, right down to the beautiful women and their bodies. People used to ask the pinup artist Alberto Vargas why he didn't paint anything other than pretty women and he would simply answer, "Show me something more beautiful than a beautiful woman and I'll paint it!" It's sad that some people frown upon burlesque because

they are unaware of its history, so they assoicate it with pole dancing. I'm not saying there is anything wrong with pole dancing, but there is a huge difference between the two.

Roxi Dlite Photo by Plastic Puppet

Eric: You're a Canadian performer, Roxi, but you've also performed in the U.S. Is there much difference between the interpretations of modern Burlesque in the two countries?

Roxi: No. I think the differences are in the performers as individuals and their take on the art form. Some performers are darker than others and take on more of a fetish theme. Some performers are more modern, which is becoming popular. Girls are mixing modern music and elements with the timelessness of burlesque. I personally choose to recreate the nostalgia of a time forgotten. The simplicity of a time when a woman's bare leg without her stockings was considered risqué.

Eric: You do some hoop acrobatics. I've seen video. You gotta work out for that? You look like you work out a lot. Especially your legs.

Roxi: Uh, yeah, I work out.

Eric: Yeah, you have awesome legs. Do you ever need someone to, like, oil down your legs after a workout?

Roxi: Thanks, but uh . . . I'm a one leg-oiler woman. In other words, my boyfriend does a great job.

Eric: Did you know artists have incredibly powerful yet delicate hands? It's part of their craft. Especially comic book artists. I have my own oils.

Roxi: Are you retarded?

At this point Roxi stopped returning my emails. Oh well, fortunately for me, while being a guest on the *Lucky Yates Show* in Atlanta, I ran into some performers in The Dames Aflame troupe.

Dames Aflame

Eric: Can you give me a little background on Dames Aflame? What's the origin of your troupe?

Dames: Here is a nutshell—Dames Aflame began as a collective of Atlanta artists and performers (Go-Go Max, Torchy Taboo, Greg Theakston to name a few) who got together to put on their version of an old-fashioned Burlesque Show once a year at a local bar (Catch City Club, Star Community Bar, and the EARL were usually the venues). Big Mike Geier (of Useless Playboys fame) hosted the first show in 1995. His wife Shannon Newton first performed with Mike in a Dames Aflame show in 1999. While cast and crew members have come and gone over the years, the one constant has been Big Mike. He and wife Shannon have since developed the Dames Aflame from what originated as a loose collective of artists to a finely tuned troupe of professional performers. Today, Dames Aflame is managed by Shannon (who acts as Director and Administrator when she's not performing as "Madly Deeply" or "MonkeyZuma") and Stephanie Ludwig (who designs the costumes when she's not performing as Dames' #1 knock-out "Luna

Luxx"). Big Mike is still involved and acts as Producer and feature performer of the monthly show at the Laughing Skull Lounge in Midtown Atlanta. The current troupe consists of about one dozen core performers, but we're always incorporating new talent.

Eric: I've been told Dames Aflame is not your typical burlesque show. What artistically speaking is it that sets you apart?

Dames: Since we've been producing our ninety-minute show at the Laughing Skull, we've been applying the following guidelines in determining what acts we allow on stage: the act has to be super sexy, super hilarious, or super fucked-up (or in the case of our "Gone with the Whuh?" number, a mixture of all three!). We're also big on original costuming (we try to avoid any store-bought, ready-made costumery so as not to chance using what someone in another troupe might already be using).

We also strive to incorporate ensemble routines in as many acts as possible. When the Dames Aflame performed in the 2005 New York Burlesque Festival, we were discovered by Andrew Watson (Creative Director of Cirque du Soleil and Zumanity) who was scouting talent for his burlesque showcase that he was producing with Theirry Mugler at the Just For Laughs Theater in Montreal. Andrew hired me, Big Mike, and Luna to perform our "Hot Donuts Now" and "Sexy Centurion" acts in the burlesque showcase in January 2006 which featured burlesque talent from all over the U.S. and Canada (like Murray Hill and Amanda Lepore from NYC, Catherine D'Lish and Selena Luna from Los Angeles, and several Cirque clowns from all over Canada). Andrew said what attracted him to Dames Aflame was the fact that our acts were ensemble pieces. Ninety percent of the acts in the NY Burlesque Festival were simply solo dances that didn't appear to require too much coordination. He said our acts stood out because they featured both men and women and we had live singing on top of the dancing/striptease. Dana Snyder, a burlesque historian and performer (in addition to being the voice of Master Shake on *ATHF*) said the same thing after he saw our show at the Laughing Skull. He appreciated the ensemble routines because he knows how complicated it can be to teach multiple performers choreography and how time-consuming it is to create original coordinating costumes. He said it was refreshing to see the entire cast working cohesively. Most of the shows that he has seen seem to be solo performers from various troupes just plugged into a loose variety show format. I have to credit Andrew Watson and Thierry Mugler with inspiring us to continue developing the cohesive quality. For their burlesque showcase in Montreal, Mr. Mugler told us that he wanted the audience to think that we had all been touring together and putting on this particular show for months so that the audience could imagine for themselves the family-like comraderie or competitive rivalries or sordid affairs that would seem inevitable in a gypsy-like group of performers (even though in reality we were all from different corners of the continent and had only been working together for one week, so we were all behaving very politely). While Mugler and Watson originally hired me, Mike, and Luna to perform our two numbers that they'd seen in the NY Burlesque Fest, once we got to Montreal and began rehearsals, they created a third act just for the three of us and they also had Luna and I performing in additional acts with other performers. They took advantage of our ability to work in an ensemble format and the result reinforced in us the value of apparent cohesion in a production.

Eric: Amazing. Hey, did you know artists have incredibly powerful yet delicate hands?

Dames: "Whuh? Hey! Let go of me!"

At this point I was forcibly removed from the Laughing Skull Lounge and my interview was cut short.

For more info on burlesque-y type stuff, check out:

- www.myspace.com/roxidlite – MySpace page of Canadian sweetheart Roxi Dlite!
- www.damesaflame.com – Official website of Atlanta's vaudevillian darlings the Dames Aflame!
- www.pantyraiddames.com and
- www.ladyandthetramps.com – The local ladies from Nashville!

Anyway, time to wrap this up. Next issue I'll tell all you guys about my cage fighter.

—Eric Powell

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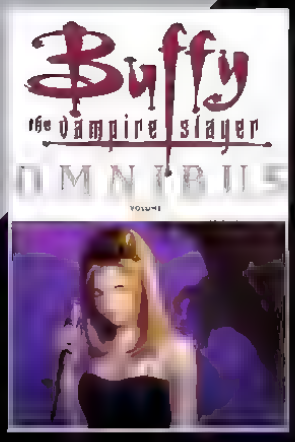

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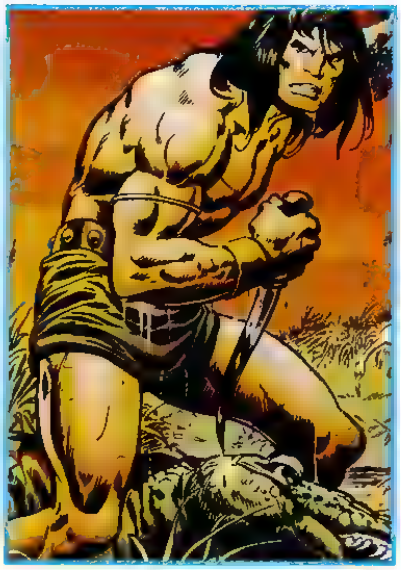

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DISCOVER DARK HORSE POWER

DECEMBER 2007

IN 2003, DARK HORSE LAUNCHED A LINE OF HORROR COMICS BUILT AROUND *HELLBOY* AND *BUFFY*, AND THE THEN-NEW ADDITIONS TO OUR LINEUP, *CRIMINAL MACABRE* AND *THE GOON*. We invite you to Discover Darkness during the long cold nights this winter by turning our focus again to our horror line, and what makes our line unique.

Where would horror comics be without monsters? And yet how many modern horror comics take themselves too seriously to make use of monsters? Whether in sci-fi, superhero comics, or horror, the monster always livens up a story, in terms of action and visual punch. This month, even the usually reserved and literary *Rex Mundi* (issue #9) makes great use of a monster, borrowing from mythology and turning the griffin into something awful. This month Dark Horse has vampires (*Cut*); a demon baby (*Criminal Macabre*); a shapeshifter worse than the werewolf (*B.P.R.D.*); zombies (*Living with the Dead*); and probably everything else you can think of in Steve Niles's *Criminal Macabre: The Complete Short Stories*, collecting all his prose Cal McDonald work.

While there are moments of shocking, visceral horror in *B.P.R.D.*, *Rex Mundi*, and *City of Others*, we seldom rely on the gross-out to be the source of entertainment. It's a legitimate direction for the horror genre, but gore in comics just isn't the same as in film, where you can see the splatter move across the screen. It's just another color of ink, which doesn't seem like a compelling storytelling trick. Dark Horse publisher Mike Richardson has written some horror books lately. In *Cut* he borrows his setup from the torture-porn subgenre—but never rubs the reader's face in blood and guts; he relies on what frightens the main characters, the waiting and not knowing. We're not prudes—we did publish *The Nail* and *Satan's Sodomy Baby*—but we think there are more effective ways to get under the readers' skin.

The Goon is known for its humor, and *Evil Dead* is blatantly funny, but humor also abounds in other books. The writing of Joss Whedon, Mike Mignola, and Steve Niles all rely on a certain amount of levity. Laughter can contrast the light and the dark. It can catch the reader off-guard. As anyone who's been to a horror movie in the theater can tell you, at some point, the tension is gonna be so great the audience is gonna have to laugh. Better that they laugh when you want them to.

And lest you think that we don't take ourselves seriously *enough*, one of the most distinctive traits in our line is a certain literary quality. Mignola's and Niles's works draw upon such diverse literary background as folklore, nineteenth-century gothic fiction, and the pulp horror and detective stories of the early twentieth century. *Rex Mundi* is intensely literary, as dense as *Watchmen*—when complete it will be recognized as the more literary cousin of *The Da Vinci Code*.

A carelessly sketched-out character in a slasher film isn't meant to elicit sympathy; they're there to give you a thrill, to make it easy to watch them die. Our books feature real characters, never secondary to the trappings of the genre. Only through such real *characters* can horror fiction shake the convictions that keep us safe, inspiring the "cosmic awe" that Lovecraft wrote about, and upending the morality that guides us.

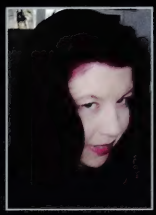
To connect on that level of fear, we find these qualities popping up again and again in our books. If you're reading this page, maybe you're already a fan of our horror books—or maybe you're reading this in the back of a *Star Wars* comic, or *Groo*. In that case, Discover Darkness with us this winter.

Scott Allie

Scott Allie
editor

DARK HORSE HEROES

CLEM ROBINS has been a **comics lettering aficionado** for thirty years, but in his free time enjoys plein air landscape painting, teaching human anatomy for artists at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, and watching films where he can point out the end of the first act while appreciating a sock in the arm from his wife, Lisa.



KATHERINE KELLER editor-in-chief of the web zine **Sequential Tart,** favors the month of October as spent in Southern Nevada, where it's warm and humidity and insect infestations are nonexistent. She'd love to see more well-rounded female characters in comics such as Conan's Janissa, an extremely "strong-willed" and "compelling character."

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